



Monroe  
**BUSINESS  
NEWSLETTER**

City of Monroe, Washington

**January 2025**



**A New Year is Dawning**

And the Mayor, City Councilmembers, and Staff of the City of Monroe wish all of our local business owners, managers, and employees a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2025!



Washington State Department of  
**Labor & Industries**

**Jan. 1 Sees Changes to Minimum Wage, Paid Sick Leave, etc., for Many Washington Workers**

### **State minimum wage**

The state's minimum wage increases to \$16.66 an hour, up 2.35% from 2024. It applies to workers age 16 and up. Employers may pay 85% of that wage, or \$14.16 an hour, to workers ages 14-15.

### **Overtime exempt workers**

The salary threshold used to determine if certain workers are exempt from overtime pay is going up to \$1,332.80 a week (\$69,305.60 a year) for employers with up to 50 employees, and \$1,499.40 a week (\$77,968.80 a year) for employers with 51 or more employees. The rate affects executive, administrative, and professional workers, plus computer professionals and outside salespeople. That means, if workers in those categories do not get paid for overtime, they must get paid at least those salaries.

The hourly wage for exempt computer professionals will be \$58.31, or 3.5 times the minimum wage.

For information about paid sick leave, employer incentives, noncompete agreements, and more, click [here](#).

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## **APEX & SBDC First Friday Follow-Ups**

Are you looking for a dedicated lunch hour to learn what it takes to grow your business?

First Friday Follow-up is a monthly open-forum, round table for business owners to get answers from your local APEX and SBDC Advisors.

Bring your questions regarding **government contracting** and how to grow your business.

Learn more about these two resources and how to incorporate new strategies and tactics.

**[RSVP here for Jan 3](#)**

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## **WA Small Business Development Center FREE Training Events for Small Business Owners**

**[Start Simple Course - Starts January 8, 4 - 6 pm](#)**

This course will help you quickly "kick the tires" on your new business idea. In just four 2-hour virtual sessions, including one-on-one homework assistance with our First Step Business Advisor, you will learn to apply basic business concepts to know if your business goal is realistic and achievable. **[Register here](#)**

***Curso en español - comienza 7 de enero, 6 - 8 pm. [Regístrate aquí](#)***

**[Contractor Workshop - January 23](#)**

Are you a small business owner in Washington state looking to gain a comprehensive understanding of contractor regulations? Join us for an invaluable in-person workshop designed to demystify the

complexities of working with contractors.

This workshop is essential for staying up to date with regulatory changes and ensuring your business operates within legal parameters. Don't miss this opportunity to gain critical insights and protect your business.

**January 23 English: 4 - 5pm / Español: 5 - 6 pm**

**[Register / Regístrate](#)**

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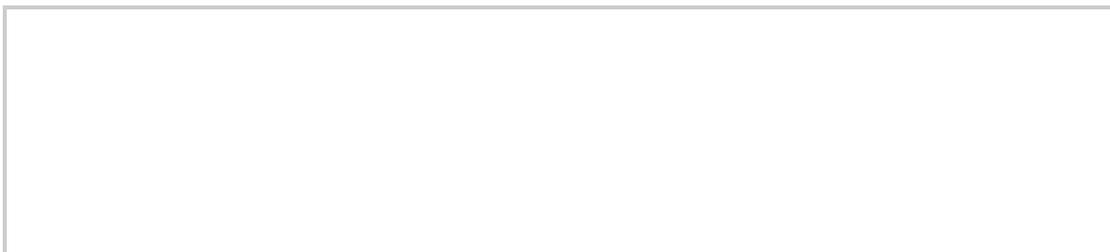


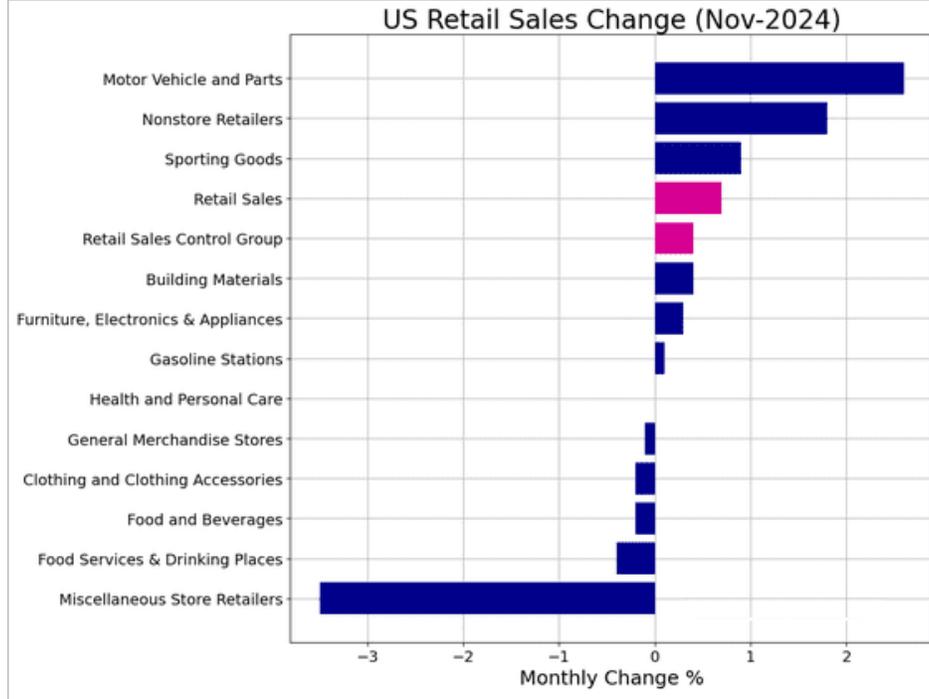
Looking for kickstarter grants to jumpstart your business? Finding and applying for business grants can be challenging for both new and established businesses. Startup grants, in particular, can be tough to locate, and the application process often feels long and tedious.

To make things easier, **GrantWatch** has compiled a list of 10 kickstarter grants for startup businesses, carefully curated from our nearly **200 Entrepreneurs and Startups Grants**. **[This resourceful list](#)** is designed to help reduce the stress of searching for startup funding and get you one step closer to achieving your goals!

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## **US Holiday Retail Sales Beat Expectations**





November retail sales rose 0.7%, surpassing Wall Street's 0.6% forecast, signaling strong consumer resilience at the beginning of the holiday season. Gains were led by a 2.4% jump in auto sales and a 1.8% increase in online shopping. The report underscores a hardy U.S. economy, which was reflected in the Fed's additional 25-basis point cut in federal funds interest rates in December. While final retail sales figures for December are not yet in, MasterCard is reporting preliminary numbers showing approximately a 3.8% increase over last year.

## Greater Seattle Export Accelerator

**Go global. Increase profits and diversify risks.**

The Greater Seattle Export Accelerator (GSEA) provides advanced **export training and access to international markets**. Designed for businesses with a developed export strategy, GSEA supports companies across King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties. By equipping small businesses with the tools to expand their exports, we help boost profits, diversify risks, and create new jobs. The application to participate is open until **January 31, 2025** and can be found [here](#). More information about GSEA can be found [here](#).



## Business Resource Navigator

### Evergreen BizLink Resource Navigator

The Evergreen BizLink Resource Navigator will connect you and your business with nonprofit resources in your area to help you **grow and thrive**. Use the search tool on their website to search for **customized resources** by location, area of assistance, business stage, business type, industry, demographics, and key words. For more information or to get started, check out: [EvergreenBizLink.com](https://www.EvergreenBizLink.com)

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# ADOPT-A-PLANTER!

## MAIN STREET

Your Donation Will Ensure Plants & Color in Main Street's Planters

**Donate just \$100 per year**

**Receive:**

- **City certificate from Mayor and City Council**
- **Mention in City print and online media**
- **Your Business listed in "Adopt-A-Planter" signage at Main Street Kiosks**

*Make your donation of \$100 by check made out to "City of Monroe" (mention "Adopt-a-Planter").*

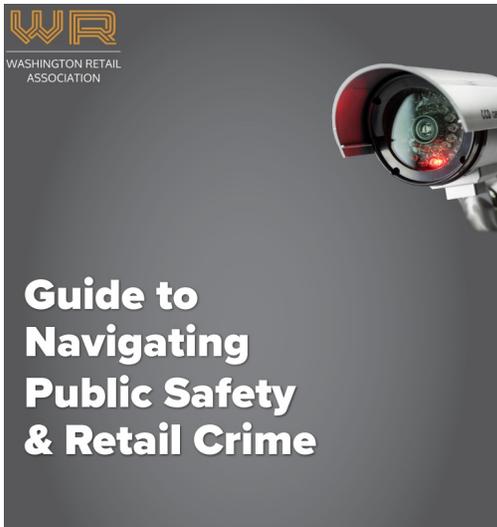
*Send to Monroe City Hall, Attn: Shelley Rowe,  
Parks & Rec. Admin. Asst., 806 W. Main St.,  
Monroe, WA 98272.*

*For more information, email Patrick Doherty at  
[pdoherty@monroewa.gov](mailto:pdoherty@monroewa.gov)*

## Useful Guide for Dealing with Retail Crime and Safety

The Washington Retail Association has compiled a useful *Guide to Navigating Public Safety & Retail Crime*.

**[Peruse the Guide!](#)**



**Guide to Navigating Public Safety & Retail Crime**



## Main Street America Offers Series of Insightful Podcasts for Small Businesses

Latest in the series:

### *Crafting a Creative Business Journey*

Join host Matt Wagner for his conversation with husband-and-wife duo, Phoebe and Jonathan Carpenter Eells, co-owners of eISage Designs in Mount Vernon, Washington. Phoebe and Jonathan share their journey from teachers and parents to working artists then thriving business owners.

[Listen in and follow the series.](#)

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## Monthly Business Profiles - Monroe Plaza Shopping Center -



### **Sunflower Mill European Grocery**

With a friendly smile and greeting owner Olena Sokolenko greets you - in



### **Route 2 Taproom**

With local residents as staff, Route 2 Taproom may be Monroe's answer to Cheers, with most customers on a first-name basis. Prominently located on the west side of Monroe Plaza, Route 2 Taproom has been a premiere Monroe dining-drinking

English or Russian! - backed by a bright mural of a sunny field with sunflowers and a windmill as you enter this hidden gem in the far northwest corner of Monroe Plaza shopping center - on the north side of US-2 at 19953.

Featuring delicacies from Eastern Europe (Germany to Russia), Olena serves both imported and locally prepared food items.

Open for just two years, Sunflower Mill has become something of a gathering place for the growing Eastern European community in the Sky and Sno Valleys - folks Olena treats like family.

Stop in Mondays through Saturdays for a familiar favorite or exotic treat - as well as a hearty chat with Olena.

establishment for going on 10 years.

Locally owned by Stephanie Martinez and Frank Espinoza, Route 2 offers 29 rotating tap brews, mostly small-batch, craft beers from the PNW. Couple that with a scratch kitchen, serving up tasty fare, and the largest family-friendly outdoor patio in Monroe - complete with cozy fire pits!

Catering to all, Route 2 offers nonalcoholic and gluten-free beers, as well as root beers and sodas.

Route 2 offers regular weekly, as well as holiday/special, events to engage the community such as trivia, brewers nights and holiday-themed brunches. And the patio is a great place for private parties, receptions and events.



No matter what phase your business is in -- from starting up or growing, to down-sizing -- the **Small Business Guide**, created by the State Commerce Department, is an invaluable resource for your business.



Owning a business is both exciting and intimidating.

If you're looking for local resources, free business

The **Guide** covers:

- Planning -- Start-Up
- Payroll -- Opening
- Management -- Growth
- Closure -- Loan Programs
- And more

The State also offers an array of knowledgeable **Small Business Liaisons** who can help you with specialized resources and information.

Plus, **FREE workshops** are available, providing essential information and resources to help start and grow your business.

templates, e-guides, check-lists, and other helpful resources for **starting or growing** your enterprise, SCORE Greater Seattle is your destination. SCORE's mentors can assist in putting your ideas into action.

**Tools and resources to help your small business grow - SCORE**



### Upcoming Events

Jayme Biendl Memorial 5K Walk/Run - Saturday, Jan 4, 9am - 12pm

New Year Chamber of Commerce Luncheon - Tuesday, Jan 14, 11:30am - 1:00pm

The Great Junk Hunt - Friday, Feb 7, 4pm - 9pm; Saturday, Feb 8, 9am - 4pm

*And More...*

**[More information here](#)**

**Monroe Listens  
Report Your Issue!**

The City offers a direct and easy way to send your questions, concerns, requests, and compliments directly to the City staff person who can help you. Potholes, graffiti, fallen tree limbs, drainage problems, etc. Please let us know at [Monroe Listens](#).



## MAYOR



Geoffrey Thomas

Have a question or comment for Mayor Thomas?  
Contact him at [GThomas@MonroeWA.gov](mailto:GThomas@MonroeWA.gov)



Councilmember  
Kevin Hanford



Councilmember  
Jacob Walker



Councilmember  
Jason Gamble



Councilmember  
Kirk Scarboro



Councilmember  
Heather Fulcher



Councilmember  
Tami Beaumont



Councilmember  
Kyle Fisher

Have a question or comment for your Councilmembers?  
Contact them at [Councilmembers@MonroeWA.gov](mailto:Councilmembers@MonroeWA.gov)

[Council  
Agendas/Minutes](#)



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